

House Republican Press Release

March 20, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Representative Frey: Route 7 Project On Schedule



State Representative John H. Frey, R-Ridgefield, today said the Phase 1 of the Route 7 widening/reconstruction project is on schedule and Ridgefielders will continue to see additional signs of progress with the start of spring. The project involves widening Route 7 from Route 35 in Ridgefield, northerly to the existing interchange at Wooster Heights Road in Danbury (at Interstate 84). The initiative

will widen the two-lane roadway to four lanes and improve intersections at Starrs Plain Road, West Starrs Plain Road and Bennetts Farm Road. Phase one, comprising a 2.1-mile section that begins in Ridgefield, is expected to be completed in September 2007.

Within the next few weeks, people can expect to see existing utility poles removed. The relocation of telephone, electricity and cable television lines will be completed. The widening construction, which include roadway improvements along embankments will continue to involve some blasting of rock and ledge, said Rep. Frey.

Rep. Frey, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader, is largely credited with jump-starting the long-stalled project along. In April 2003, he held a ‘summit’ meeting in former Governor Rowland’s office with senior members of his staff as well as appropriate employees of the Department of Environment Protection and the Department of Transportation. At this meeting, a month-by-month schedule of accountability was agreed to by all parties, a schedule that Rep. Frey has closely monitored.

“After we agreed to the schedule, I have been pleased with the diligence DOT staff has given to this project,” said Rep. Frey, who has continued to be updated on a weekly basis on the construction progress. “Everyone knows there is going to be a certain amount of disruption in town due to the construction but DOT has demonstrated a commitment to keeping the work running smoothly and on schedule. I think people are generally surprised how smooth the work has gone so far.”

For about 10 weeks beginning in mid-April, alternating, one-way traffic will begin for night time work. At that time, roadway reconstruction will begin adding a new lane at the southern end construction zone. Revisions to the intersection at West Starrs Plain Road are currently being completed. Beginning in May, Starrs Plain Road will be closed for 60 days while traffic is rerouted. Rep. Frey added that he negotiated for night time work for the most disruptive points during the roadway construction.

In February 2005, the State Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded Tilcon Inc., of New Britain, CT, a \$16 million contract to begin the project. The second phase of the project, which will comprise the remaining 1.5 miles, is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2008 and take two to three years to complete, with a \$20 million cost. The state will contribute \$29 million for the total cost of both phases, with the federal government paying the remaining \$7 million.